



Why should you have your child tested for lead?

1.

Childhood lead exposure is one of the most common environmental health hazards affecting children, and it can be prevented. Any family can be affected, regardless of race or income level. **In Illinois, the most common source of lead exposure is older homes with peeling or chipping lead-based paint.**



2.

There is **no safe level of lead in the body**. Even small amounts can harm a child's health and brain development. The harm caused by lead cannot be reversed. Lead can stay in the body for many years.

Testing for lead is important because even healthy-looking children can have high levels. You can't tell if a child has been exposed to lead without a blood test. Early testing helps find lead before it causes further harm. A blood test is the only way to check for lead. A level of 3.5 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$) or higher is considered elevated.



3.

Lead can be found in peeling paint in homes built before 1978. It can also be in dust, soil, and drinking water. Some items from outside the U.S., like certain home remedies or spices, may contain lead. People who work with lead or use it in hobbies can bring lead into the home on their clothes or shoes.



4.

Children 6 years old and younger are at greatest risk for harm from lead exposure. Lead can cause developmental delays, health problems, and learning difficulties that may last a lifetime. Children may appear healthy, but even low levels of lead can affect their thinking, learning, attention, and behavior.



5.

All children ages 9-12 months and again at 24 months **MUST** receive a blood lead test. Children 3 years of age and older should be evaluated annually using the Childhood Lead Risk Questionnaire and tested if this shows new or increased risk. A lead risk evaluation is required for enrollment in daycare, preschool, and kindergarten. Ask your child's doctor about testing. The only way to know if a child has lead in their body is through a blood test.

